

the Hon. Gustavo Antonio Gelpí, Jr. to be a United States Circuit Judge in the United States Court of Appeals for the First Circuit, to the seat left vacant by the late Judge Juan R. Torruella. On October 18, 2021, Judge Gelpí was confirmed by the Senate and received his judicial commission on October 19, 2021. I was honored to support his nomination.

The U.S. Circuit Court for the First Circuit hears appeals from the U.S. District Courts of Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Puerto Rico, and Rhode Island. A voice for Puerto Rico—a civil law jurisdiction unlike the remaining common law jurisdictions under the Circuit's purview—is necessary for the fair and impartial application of the law. However, although the population of Puerto Rico is more than double that of each of the other districts in the circuit except for Massachusetts, Judge Gelpí is only the second judge of Hispanic origin and only the second judge from Puerto Rico ever to serve in that Court since it was established by Congress in 1891. I am confident that Judge Gelpí will give Puerto Rico the loud and booming voice in that Court that has been silent since Judge Torruella's passing.

Judge Gelpí served in the United States District Court for the District of Puerto Rico for 20 years, first as a magistrate judge and then as district judge. During this time, he gained a reputation for being stern and serious, but patient and courteous; for having an even temper and a sense of humor; for having common sense and an understanding of the human condition; for being open to consider new legal theories but always following the law.

As he goes on to take his seat in the First Circuit, I would like to remind him of Justice Sandra O'Connor's admonition to judges: "Be independent, be fair, venture to be wise."

"Be independent". Decide matters that come before you impartially, on the basis of facts, in accordance with the law, and without regards to outside influence, self-interest, prejudice, or favoritism.

"Be fair". Stay true to the rule that all persons are equal before the eyes of the law. Make sure that judicial proceedings are conducted fairly and that the rights of the parties are respected. Remember that the appearance of fairness and impartiality is almost as important as the reality of it.

"Venture to be wise." Be humble and recognize that judges do not have monopoly on wisdom and that they will not get it right every time. Approach each case with an open mind and a willingness to learn. Be restrained in your decisions. Seek counsel from your fellow judges.

I thank Judge Gelpí for his years of exemplary service to the people of Puerto Rico and I am certain that, in this new stage of his career, he will continue to serve the people of Puerto Rico with outstanding merit.

I would also like to acknowledge my friend, Congresswoman NYDIA VELÁZQUEZ, who was an invaluable ally in raising bipartisan support for Judge Gelpí's appointment. Because we worked together for the benefit of Puerto Rico, irrespective of party lines, we were able to secure the nomination and confirmation of the most qualified candidate for the job.

## RECOGNIZING WHEATFIELD COMMONS AS THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF TONAWANDAS' NON-PROFIT OF THE YEAR

### HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, November 14, 2022*

Mr. HIGGINS of New York. Madam Speaker, today I would like to honor and recognize Wheatfield Commons, a senior living community providing assisted living and memory care to countless families in Western New York. Since 1958, residents of Erie and Niagara County have been fortunate to receive the family-oriented services of this non-profit.

Wheatfield Commons is nestled in a park-like suburban setting with inviting grounds and courtyards. In warmer weather, residents enjoy taking in the sights from a large covered front porch. Residents are always encouraged to engage with others, and at a place like Wheatfield Commons, there are so many welcoming areas, like the beautifully decorated dining rooms and cozy fireplaces. All of this is a concerted effort to create an accommodating and enriching atmosphere where residents receive the highest quality services and care.

Senior living communities ought to offer our elderly a healthy and dynamic way of living. Undoubtedly, Wheatfield Commons offers a personal approach to delivering support and services while encouraging family members to be actively involved in the care of their loved ones. Without this mission, you can imagine the potential lack of support and interpersonal connections of senior residents and their families. Luckily, Wheatfield Commons delivers for its residents.

Organizations like Wheatfield Commons do not receive an appropriate amount of praise and attention for their critical efforts, so I am pleased that their hard work can be recognized in this way. Our communities are best served when our seniors are receiving proper care and attention.

Madam Speaker, I am honored to recognize the irreplaceable Wheatfield Commons and their devoted staff. I would like to congratulate them on this well-deserved achievement.

## RECOGNIZING THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE HISTORIC SAM SHORTLINE EXCURSION TRAIN

### HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, November 14, 2022*

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Historic Savannah, Americus, & Montgomery (SAM) Shortline Excursion Train on the 20th anniversary of its first public run on October 26, 2002.

While the current SAM Shortline Excursion Train had its maiden voyage only twenty years ago, its ancestor and namesake, the Savannah, Americus, & Montgomery (SAM) Railroad Company, was founded during the 1880s by Americus attorney and banker, Colonel Samuel Hugh Hawkins. The Americus region saw its first population and construction booms with the arrival of Southwestern Railroad in the early 1850s. Following the American Civil

War, the people of southwest Georgia saw the railroad as a bright new opportunity for economic development and prosperity. But Southwestern and its lessee, the Central Railroad & Banking Company of Georgia, held a monopoly on the railroads and many in Americus began to feel the effects of exorbitant and discriminatory rates, thus contributing to a decline in local trade. When surrounding cities began proposing new rail lines to bypass Americus, Colonel Hawkins led the charge to construct new lines that would pass directly through the city, leading local investors to organize the Americus, Preston & Lumpkin Railroad (AP&L) in 1884 to ensure that Americus would continue to dominate the region's trade and continue to grow into the Twentieth Century. In 1888, Hawkins and his associates decided to extend the AP&L both east and west to create a direct route between Montgomery, Alabama, and Savannah. Later that year, the 265-mile project would be renamed as the Savannah, Americus, Montgomery Railway, known simply as "The SAM."

Before the SAM's mainline was constructed through the city, the lands surrounding Americus in Sumter County were largely undeveloped and sparsely populated. Following the boom in trade and wealth brought by the SAM, several new towns were founded throughout the region, including Richland, Cordele, Vidalia, and Lyons among others. The first new community, however, was created in Sumter County a few miles west of Americus near an older community called the Plains of Dura. Once SAM's main rail line approached the Plains of Dura community, residents of surrounding settlements began moving closer to the railroad and eventually chartered the town of Plains—the renowned home of famous Georgia peanut farmer and our 39th President, Jimmy Carter. Once fully developed, SAM Railway became the lifeblood of the city of Americus and spurred a second construction and population boom that would reshape the city as a powerful economic nexus in the region. During this period, the city saw the founding of several vital local businesses, such as the Americus Guano Company, the Americus Oil Company, the Americus Illuminating and Power Company, the Americus Construction Company, the Americus Grocery Company, as well as the town's crowning achievement—the Windsor Hotel.

Despite its transformational success, SAM was not immune from the economic struggles of the era, and in 1893, amid a financial panic, Colonel Hawkins and his associates were forced to sell their beloved SAM Railway Company to John Skelton of Richmond, Virginia who would reorganize the company as the Georgia and Alabama Railway in 1895. Samuel Hawkins went on to lose nearly \$1 million of his own money in an unsuccessful attempt to keep the railroad under local control. Nevertheless, the railroad he initially founded proved vital to the southwest Georgia community as it provided jobs, trade, freight transportation, as well as an economic engine for the budding towns and cities across southwest Georgia and Alabama.

At the start of the Twenty-first Century, local residents of the southwest Georgia region developed plans to revive the former SAM Railway as a passenger excursion route. By 2002, the excursion founders had recovered and refurbished several state-owned vintage railcars to seat up to eighty people. They rebranded

the railway as the Historic SAM Shortline Railroad to honor the rich history that shaped the region. The reborn SAM Shortline Excursion Train follows the legendary route from Cordele to Plains and gives riders scenic views of cotton fields, pecan groves, and peanut farms while riding in climate-controlled, train cars to visit sites such as the Georgia Rural Telephone Museum, Historic Downtown Americus, President Jimmy Carter's hometown of Plains and his boyhood home and farm in Archery, Georgia.

Being Georgia's only rolling state park, the excursion train hosted an impressive passenger load in 2021, even despite the COVID-19 pandemic. That year alone, the SAM Shortline Excursion Train boarded 17,000 passengers who were able to experience the fascinating history of President Carter's several political campaigns and life, as well as a glimpse of rural life at the turn of the Twentieth Century. The SAM Shortline also offers special rides throughout the year, including Halloween trick-or-treat trains, Christmas trains, dinner trains, and fundraisers, marking it a community treasure to be enjoyed by all throughout the year. The success and immense popularity of the excursion train resulted in an impressive economic impact of \$2,697,496.00 across Sumter and Crisp Counties in 2021.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join my wife, Vivian; and me, along with the more than 730,000 people of the Second Congressional District, in recognizing the Historic SAM Shortline Railroad for twenty wonderful years of bringing people closer to southwest Georgia's beautiful landscape and rich history.

#### CONGRATULATING THE LADY COMETS ON THEIR STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

#### HON. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, November 14, 2022*

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the Fatima Lady Comets on their victory in the Class 3 Softball State Championship.

These young women had a stellar season, ranked number 1 with a 33–3 record. In their championship game they overcame a 10–run deficit to claim their title. The Lady Comets should be commended for all their hard work throughout the past year and for bringing home the state championship to their school and community.

Please join me in recognizing the Lady Comets for a job well done.

#### LIFE AND LEGACY OF MONSIGNOR MICHAEL DOYLE

#### HON. DONALD NORCROSS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, November 14, 2022*

Mr. NORCROSS. Madam Speaker, Monsignor Michael Doyle was originally born in County Longford, Ireland and raised on a farm in Rosduff. He immigrated to the United

States of America in 1959 after becoming ordained into the priesthood in Wexford, Ireland and dedicated his life to the pursuit of helping others and embodied the principals of transformational love.

Upon his arrival as a member of the Diocese of Camden, Monsignor Doyle taught within the high school and had a hand in the success of fellow Camden city parishes such as St. Joseph's, St. George, and St. Joan of Arc. A graduate of Villanova University, Monsignor Doyle earned a master's degree in Education in 1962 and received an honorary doctorate in Humanities from his alma mater in 2007. He was installed as a priest in 1974 and was chosen and appointed as pastor of Sacred Heart Parish where he continued to serve for over fifty years.

Monsignor Michael Doyle was also a celebrated poet, pacifist, and provocateur. In 1971, he was a member of the Camden 28, a group of anti-Vietnam War activists who plotted to raid the Camden draft board office until the plan was revealed to the authorities. Doyle and three other Catholic priests were eventually acquitted of their charges. In addition, Doyle helped plant crosses memorializing Camden City's murder victims in front of Camden City Hall when he felt more could be done to stem rampant violence. His activism extends beyond nonviolence, Monsignor Michael Doyle is a champion of education, improved medical care, community beautification, and affordable housing.

Monsignor Doyle has been profiled by media outlets and documentaries for his work in the southern part of the City of Camden throughout the decades. As a literary force, Monsignor Doyle inspired residents both in and outside of the City of Camden through his sermons, poetry, and desire to improve the social justice landscape until retiring from active ministry in 2020.

Following his service through Sacred Heart Parish and the Camden Diocese, Monsignor Michael Doyle remained steadfast in his efforts to better the lives of those around him. He could be found actively writing letters to parishioners in efforts to fundraise for local school children.

Madam Speaker, I ask you to join me in honoring the life and legacy of Monsignor Michael Doyle and his lifelong commitment as a dedicated humanitarian and advocate for peace within the community.

#### HONORING REV. CALVIN EARL HAWKINS

#### HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, November 14, 2022*

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor a man of many talents, Rev. Calvin Earl Hawkins. Rev. Hawkins is compassionate, and a dedicated public servant devoted to the betterment of the community and success of others.

Rev. Hawkins was born on September 25, 1972, in Water Valley, Mississippi, to the parents of the late John and Earline Wright Hawkins. As the last child of nine children, Calvin graduated high school then continued his education at Northeast Mississippi Community College in Booneville, Mississippi, then on to

Mississippi State University, in Starkville, Mississippi. While at Mississippi State University, Rev. Hawkins obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in Educational Psychology, Education, and with a focus in Individual and Family Studies.

Over the years, Rev. Hawkins has been intricately involved within the community and has demonstrated immense dedication to the families and children throughout the state of Mississippi. Rev. Hawkins is a lifeline for many students in Mississippi and has started his 28th year as an educator. Rev. Hawkins is very supportive in the field of education. He is an educator at heart. His work experience includes but is not limited to an Educational/Disability Specialist, Center Administrator, and Regional Administrator for Mississippi Action for Progress, Inc.

As a Regional Administrator for Head Start, Rev. Hawkins served the counties of Yalobusha, Chickasaw and Calhoun City. He was able to provide services for an infinite number of children who needed a head start in life. Rev. Hawkins currently serves as the Coordinator for Student Services for the Coffeeville School District. Within his work career, Rev. Hawkins has worked with students between the ages of 3 years old to post-secondary status. He has consistently been an advisor and vessel for students by teaching them problem-solving and coping skills while simultaneously verbalizing to them to never give up. It has always been common practice for Rev. Hawkins to rally and encourage students with a Pep talk letting them know, "What God has for you is for you" and always providing individuals with the assurance of whatever comes their way, they can make it.

In 2011, Rev. Hawkins accepted the calling into the ministry. He is a licensed and ordained pastor. Rev. Hawkins began pastoring his first church in 2006 as the Senior Pastor of United Missionary Baptist Church in Coffeeville, Mississippi.

Rev. Hawkins serves his community in the following capacities: President of the Blackmur Library, member of the 100 Black Men of Grenada County, Mississippi, Congress President of the Mt. Moriah District Association, National Library Association, and a member of the Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc. Rev. Hawkins past membership includes the Rotary club and Water Valley Main Street Association. He is the Founder of the "Increase Your Knowledge Group, LLC," a non-profit organization to increase the knowledge of potential information within the community. In 2005, Rev. Hawkins was appointed by the Yalobusha County Sheriff and Board of Supervisor as the Chaplain for the Yalobusha County Detention Center.

Rev. Hawkins is now a published author of the book titled, *Under the Dusty Sands*. This book is an African American history book highlighting Yalobusha County, Mississippi from 1870 to 1970. Rev. Hawkins gathered history to recognize the African American citizen that paved the way in Yalobusha County. He is preparing to publish his second book, which will include the history of the oldest African American school in Yalobusha County entitled "Dear Ole Davidson". In 2022, Rev. Hawkins was recognized as an African American historian in Yalobusha County.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Rev. Calvin Earl Hawkins for his dedication and passion for his community and the State of Mississippi.